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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 06 KABUL 005695

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DEPT FOR SCA/FO DAS GASTRIGHT, SCA/A
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG
NSC FOR HARRIMAN
OSD FOR KIMMETT
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A. CG CJTF-76 POLAD

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TAGS: [MCAP](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: PRT TARIN KOWT - SHURA HELD IN CAHAR SINEH,
URUZGAN PROVINCE

Classified By: DCM RICHARD NORLAND FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) Summary - Uruzgan Governor Monib convened a shura of Cahar Cineh District residents in late September to exhort those supporting the Taliban to work with him to resolve issues peacefully, stop growing poppies, and support efforts to establish security in the province. The governor also used the event to publicly fire the local strongman and district police chief for corruption and poor management and announce his replacement. The shura was an obviously staged event and engendered little spontaneous participation. However it did lead to a significant development when elders from traditionally Taliban-dominated villages called on GOA and international forces to help rid their villages of the Taliban. Now the Governor must follow up by holding a new shura that includes these elders and work with donors to provide programs demonstrating to residents the Governor's intent and ability to deliver government services to the people of this insecure, isolated and long-neglected district. To convince the skeptics, he will need to produce a concrete, practical plan to provide trained and equipped police, initiate water and road projects and expand service at the medical clinic started by U.S. Special Forces (USSF). Donors should look to provide small amounts of assistance that support the thus far successful SF efforts to use their civil affairs projects to create and expand a security bubble in and around Osey. The Dutch PRT has followed up on this visit by providing assistance in the health sector and will be encouraged work with the GoA to ensure that trained ANP and ANAP are deployed to the area. USAID is doing the same

through Cash for
Work road and water projects. This should go a long way in
convincing residents
of Taliban-controlled villages in the vicinity that GOA
represents a positive
alternative to the Taliban . End Summary.

The Shura

12. (SBU) Uruzgan Governor Abdul Hakim Monib held a district shura on Thursday, September 21 at the district center in Osey village in Cahar Cineh. Joining Monib were Provincial Council President Mullah Hamdullah, Police Chief General Mohammed Qasim, Director of Health Almar Achmadzai, Director of Education Melem Ramatullah Kahn, Director of Reconstruction and Rural Development Engineer Mohammed Hashim and the new Cahar Cineh District Chief Haji Said Ali, who assumed his duties in Osey at the beginning of September. PRT Commander Lt. Col. Nico Tak, PRTOFF and US military representatives also attended. About 150 local residents attended the shura; most were from Osey. Few if any were from the Taliban-controlled villages that encircle Osey and dominate much of the district. Monib last held a shura in Osey

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in late May.

13. (SBU) The Governor told the audience that he wanted to reach out to local residents supporting the Taliban. Promising that none would be captured or harmed, he urged them to tell Taliban supporters to come and talk to him or the District Chief and to seek a peaceful resolution to their grievances. By contrast, he pledged to take the fight to those who refused to lay down their weapons. He also urged residents to refrain from cultivating poppy. He recognized that local farmers needed help growing other crops. Last year, he pointed out, the security situation prevented attempts to deliver seed and fertilizer to Charchine and Khaz Uruzgan districts (Note: Seed and fertilizer was distributed to all other districts in Uruzgan.). He then noted that if residents would work with him and the Afghan security forces to make those districts secure, he would see that they also received seed and fertilizer this year. Governor Monib also told the audience that he would fight against corruption and ensure people benefited from government services and investment. Specifically, he said that he had implemented a plan to build wells throughout the province. He also announced that construction would begin shortly on a road from Tarin Kowt to Osey, omitting that this road would be funded by the USG and built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. (Note: On 28 Sep, the Army Corps of Engineers awarded a \$25 million CERP-funded project to design and construct 40km of road improvements in Uruzgan. The contract duration is 720 days. In 2006 post's Alternative

Livelihood's Program

(ALP/S) worked closely with the Department of Agriculture to distribute wheat and corn seed and fertilizer to 6, 300 farmers in central Uruzgan. In Spring 2007, ALP/S will implement a vegetable seed program to benefit another estimated 9,000 farmers in Uruzgan. In addition, ALP/s will upgrade or set up veterinary field units (VFU) in the districts of Dirawud, Khas Uruzgan, Chora, Kijran, Shahidi Hassas and Siabghal. Each VFU will be supported by a trained para-veterinarian and have a sustainable vaccine, medicine, equipment supply and distribution system. End note.)

14. (SBU) Gen. Qasim also spoke, urging residents to join Afghan security forces and the international forces whose representatives sat before them to protect their homes and establish security in the district. Noting recent comments made by Pakistan's President Musharraf equating the Taliban with all Pashtun peoples, he exhorted them to resist the Taliban and prove the President wrong.

15. (C) A local resident seated next to the governor was the only resident to speak. He delivered a loud, dramatic speech to the Governor purportedly on behalf of members of the audience pledging to bring their Taliban neighbors to the table and not grow poppy if given seeds and fertilizer. Well-known

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to US military forces operating in the district, the speaker, Haji Razik Khan, recently lost his position as village elder in Shamashad and was forced to move to the village of Doane. He is assessed to now have little credibility with local residents, but appears to have maintained his relationship with Governor. The Governor's spokesman provided information to the BBC about the shura, which ran a story portraying Razik Khan's statement as a pledge made by area farmers not to grow poppy in exchange for access to assistance in farming other crops.

16. (SBU) When Razik Khan finished speaking, the district chief told the governor that residents had met in preparation for the shura and were invited to submit lists of services or government projects they requested. One by one, about five men rose and gave the governor their lists. According to the MRRD Director, these lists included requests from Osey residents for canals for water management and irrigation, a water storage tower and a permanent medical clinic.

17. (SBU) In an apparent attempt to drive home his message of reconciliation to Taliban supporters in the region, Monib announced at the end of the shura that several elders from the Taliban-controlled village of Yakhdan were in attendance. They could not, he claimed, meet with him in public for safety reasons. Therefore, he would retire to a conference room where he would meet them in

private. We were not able to verify his claim that these men were indeed from Yakhdan, but the provincial MRRD director told PRTOFF later with great certainty that all attendees were from Osey, the Taliban having prevented residents from other villages from attending.

District Chief of Police Fired

18. (SBU) Drama was breathed into the event when the governor announced he was replacing district police chief and local strongman Naim Khan and introduced his placement, Salem Jon. The fireworks started at a small meeting prior to the shura attended by provincial and district officials as well as PRT and US representatives. Having gotten wind of what was to come, Naim Khan delivered the opening blast claiming that he hadn't received money for salaries in the five months since the last shura at the end of May. He claimed this was the reason police operating in the district had not been paid. Monib and Gen. Qasim disputed this assertion, forcing him to admit that he had indeed received funds on two other occasions. Caught, Naim extracted from Qasim an admission that the latter had not paid him funds for food allowances for six months. Qasim countered weakly that he could not get sufficient cash to make those payments. Naim also made unanswered accusations that Qasim forced him

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to sign for more weapons and ammunition than he had received.

19. (SBU) Despite having asserted his dedication to fight corruption, Governor Monib made no reference to the accusations against Naim Khan at the shura itself. He simply thanked Naim for his service, then introduced the new district chief of police, Salem Jon. At that moment, about ten men rose to protest Naim's firing -- the only spontaneous reaction from the audience. During the lunch for the Governor, Naim's militia arrived and gathered at several points outside the district building compound; the few ANP present left their post. PRT force protection watched as the deputy police chief defused the situation and talked militia members into going back to their normal posts. (As is the case throughout the province, there are only a handful of ANP in Cahar Cineh, and security is provided largely by militia forces under the command of local leaders like Naim Kahn.) Governor Monib later remarked that he had paid Naim an unspecified sum of money and that Naim no longer presented any danger.

Osey: Island of Safety Encircled by Taliban

10. (C) Osey is relatively secure and supportive of the GOA. U.S. Special Forces (USSF) members operating at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Cobra walk

through the village with no protective gear carrying only side arms. However, they reported to PRTOFF when they travel more than a few kilometers in any direction they regularly come into conflict with Taliban and other anti-coalition military forces (ACM). The lack of Afghan security forces in the district further complicates their task. There are currently only 22 ANP and 20 ANA in the district. Moreover, Osey and neighboring villages of Lower and Upper Doane and Shamadshad are paying dearly for their cooperation with the GOA and USSF. Taliban occupy the village of Yakhdan that lies at a cross roads on the only road wide enough to permit jingle (cargo) trucks to travel from the provincial capital Tarin Kowt and points south. They halt nearly all trucks passing through Yakhdan from traveling to Osey. Those they do let pass are owned by ACM sympathizers which travel to smaller Taliban-controlled villages to the north and east of Osey. As a result, the Osey bazaar is nearly deserted and devoid of goods. The few goods that are for sale, according to the local population, are too expensive to buy.

11. (C) Until recently, even the town of Osey was not a permissive environment according to the U.S. Special Forces (USSF). Rather than retreating into their FOB, the current unit-which arrived in mid-August - routinely patrolled Osey and other potentially friendly neighboring hamlets. Their medics reopened the village clinic and offered treatment there three times a week. USSF

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support local education by paying Osey's only teacher, giving him school supplies and supporting his wife's efforts to educate girls. They are working with USAID to expand Cash For Work activities which will include water management projects and roads, among others. This collaboration between USAID and Special Forces has helped to tip the balance of power in this small area towards the GOA and Coalition - a partnership that is currently working to expand its influence in Uruzgan province. U.S. Special Forces also give the new district chief, local mullahs and the teacher airtime on the small FM radio on the small radio-in-a-box that they operate from a station near the FOB. This station has a reach of 18 km and extends the reach of moderate and pro-GOA messages into Taliban-controlled villages in the area. While there, PRT members witnessed the powerful effect achieved from small amounts of assistance and FM broadcasting of public service messaging. The medics took advantage of the presence of female PRT members to invite local women to come to the clinic for treatment. Women are rarely seen on the streets in this area, and the USSF medics had only treated two women to date and then only for dire medical emergencies. The invitation message was broadcast over the FM radio the night before the shura. The next day, more than

50 women appeared for treatment. They had come on foot, some from villages as far as 9 km away.

Comment

¶12. (C) While the governor managed to attract positive coverage of the shura in the international press, it was initially difficult to assess the success of the event in attracting support from the local population. Much of the shura appeared to have been inexpertly staged. Supposedly spontaneous occurrences such as the speech of the local elder and the meeting with Yakhdan residents failed to engender any public demonstration of support for the governor. And while local leaders routinely plead for greater security and both the Dutch and USSF support Naim's removal, it is unlikely that firing Naim and replacing him with an illiterate outsider with no formal police training will lead to any improvement. Naim will remain in the area presumably maintaining control over his own militia and is likely to continue to be a factor despite having lost his formal position.

¶13. (C) Recently it became clear that the shura and Monib's behind-the-scenes work, together with USSF efforts, have produced results. At the end of October, a delegation of elders from a number of villages traditionally allied with the Taliban from Keshay through Yakhdan and north towards the Uruzgan-Dai Kundi border showed up at FOB Ripley. They told the ODA that they no longer wanted

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Taliban presence in their villages and asked for help from international forces and the GoA to throw them out and provide security and development to their people. The PRT and USSF worked together to encourage Governor Monib to lead the response to this overture. We helped him draft a radio response that was broadcast over the FM station located near FOB Cobra, and we hope to make it possible for him to return to hold a follow-on shura in Cahar Cineh in the coming weeks.

¶14. (C) We are also looking for ways to creatively and selectively use development assistance to respond to this call from the people and multiply the effects already being achieved by the USSF unit at Cobra, to expand the bubble of security they have created in and around Osey. The Dutch PRT is looking for ways to support and expand the reach, sustainability and Afghan ownership of the medical clinic the USSF is now running. The Cash For Work program has been extended in Uruzgan until December 2007 to the tune of \$2 million USD. To date, the project has provided USD \$569,087 in wages to 3,100 Afghan laborers for a total of 133,238 labor days. Cash For Work activities provide the labor needed to rehabilitate and repair arterial roads, irrigation

canals and construct
dikes for flood protection of family farms in Tarin Kowt,
Chora, Dirawud,
Shahidi Hassas and Khas Uruzgan districts. To date, ALP/S
has completed 54
Cash For Work activities, including rehabilitation of 31
kilometers of irrigation
canals/karezes and 10 kilometers of arterial roads. These
activities not only inject
much needed income into the local economy, but are also
essential to the success
of agribusiness and improved access to markets leading to
reduced operational
costs. Additionally, programs are expanding into
agriculture. USAID has already
completed one radio station and plans to construct at least
one more this year and
will provide programming and technical assistance.

¶15. (C) Due to the security situation in the region, USAID
has struggled to
engage many remote areas in Uruzgan. However, through a
growing relationship
with Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force Afghanistan
(CJSOTF-A),
ALP/S has been able to reach and engage areas like Shahidi
Hassas District with
significant results. USAID will continue to work in tandem
with CJSOTF-A to
design short and long term community and government
empowerment strategies
to combat the efforts of the anti-government elements.
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